

## Town of Groton

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## Meeting Minutes

**Date:** July 9, 2019  
**Time:** 7 p.m.  
**Location:** Town Hall First Floor Meeting Room  
**Commissioners Present:** Donald Black, Anna Eliot, Jon Strauss  
**Called in** Tim Siok 8:07pm to 8:50pm on phone  
**Commissioner Absent:** Kenneth Bushnell  
**Others present:** Diana Mendel, Bennett Taylor, Colin Taylor, John Taylor and other interested parties  
Maureen Adema, Admin. Asst.

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**Donald Black called the July 9, 2019 Park Commission Meeting to order at 7:00 pm.**

### Field Use Request Applications

- **Town Field –September 21, 2019 – September 22, 2019, Saturday 3pm to Sunday 10am**

#### **Groton Dunstable Scouts Recruiting Committee, John Taylor**

The Scouts have a recruiting event that is scheduled for September 21, 2019. A Field Use request was approved at the last meeting for the event. The event includes the Groton Dunstable Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts from Groton, Dunstable, Ayer and Shirley. The ages of the children/scouts are 5/6 years old in Lions and Daisies up to Scouts 21 years old. The Recruiting Event will have 15 to 20 demonstration stations of activities related to Scouting.

After the recruiting event at Legion Hall, the Scouts would like to have a camp out on Town Field, Saturday September 21<sup>st</sup> to 3pm - Sunday, September 22<sup>nd</sup> 10am.

The plan is to cook dinner and breakfast and have a bonfire and sleep in tents overnight.

### **Comments and Questions from Park Commissioners**

- The Fire Chief would have to approve the bonfire/camp fire. There are times of the year when; fires are not permitted. If the bonfire/camp is approved by Fire Chief McCurdy, the location would not be allowed on the infield of the ball field. *Mr. Taylor will contact Chief McCurdy for approval, The Explorers are part of this event, so the Fire and Police have knowledge of the event.*
- Camp fire Must be in the foul area of the field.
- What is the proposed size of the fire? *The fire will be about 4ft to 5ft high. Last no more than 30 minutes. Done in a container, will be controlled. Request is same as Christmas Tree bonfire.*
- A bonfire can leave a mess. *The Scouts live by "Leave no trace". All mess will be cleared.*
- Have you been in contact with GD Baseball about field use on this weekend? There is fall baseball in Groton. *Mr. Taylor will contact Baseball and Park Commission Kenny Bushnell.*
- How many people? What are the ages? *Possibly 50 people, adults and children, 30 tents, no one under the age of 8 or 9. The younger Scouts must have parent stay for the camp out.*
- Has a plan been laid out to where the tents will be? *Mr. Taylor will do a site walk to determine the lay out where tents will go and any other equipment. Don Black will attend site walk.*
- Do you have insurance? *The Event committee does not have separate insurance. Will see about getting insurance.*
- Will you bring in your own porta potties or need to use the ones currently at Town Field? *Would like to use the ones currently at the field.*
- There is a history of the Scouts doing this in the past.

**Don Black made a motion to approve the field use request for the Scout Campout starting at 3pm on Saturday, September 21, 2019 ending on Sunday, September 22, 2019 at 10am with the knowledge all trash will be removed and the property will be left as found, with the following conditions being met and communicated to the Park Commission:**

- **Communicate to GD Baseball about the event, and ensure no conflict or overlap.**
- **Approval from Fire Chief regarding bonfire/camp fire**
- **The bonfire will not damage the field**
- **Insurance Certificate submitted**
- **Site walk with Commissioner Black for tent and equipment install locations.**

**Anna Eliot seconded the motion. The motion carried 3 to 0.**

- **Town Playground/Gazebo – Birthday Party, June 28, 2019 – Sunday 11am to 2pm**  
**Resident Sarcchita Bera**

Ms. Bera was not present at the meeting. Ms. Bera, a Groton resident proposes to host a nine-year-old birthday party for her son. Maureen communicated that Ms. Bera is aware that the property cannot be made unavailable to the public during the party and she must remove any trash from the party. There is no conflict with proposed location, day or time with field use permits.

**Don Black made a motion to approve the field use permit submitted by resident Sarcchita Bere to use the Town Playground and Gazebo on Sunday, June 28, 2019, start time 11am end time 2pm. Anna Eliot seconded the motion. Motion carried 3 to 0.**

- **Town Field – Yoga Class by Donation, August 18, 2019 – 9:30am to 10:30am**  
**Jillian Joy Sierra**

An email was received after close of business but Maureen added the request in tonight's packets, with the thought the Commissioners would like to speak to the application at tonight's meeting in order to give applicant feedback prior to the requested date for field use.

Ms. Sierra was not present at the meeting. The Commissioners discussed the application. Agreeing that the request was for one day, it is easy to agree to, and the class is by donation, not a fee.

Along with stating, field use for all residents should be considered. This is just for one-day, and if the field is open, with no conflicts with other field users, should be okay. Ms. Sierra should be allowed to host a Yoga Class with donations, if the following conditions are met;

- Provide Insurance
- The Class is free and open to the public.

Maureen will email the conditions to Ms. Sierra

**Jon Strauss made a motion to approve the field use request submitted by resident Jillian Joy Sierra for a one-day use of the field behind the Library/Town Playground on Sunday August 18, 2019 from 9:30am to 10:30 am with the conditions that the yoga class is free and open to the public and insurance certificate is provided. Anna Eliot seconded the motion. The motion carried 3 to 0.**

- **Cutler Field Parking Lot – BSA Troop 12 Carwash Fundraiser**  
**Application Withdrawn**

**Girl Scout Gold Award Project, Bat Boxes – Diana Mendel**

Diana Mendel a GD High School Junior was present to seek advice, direction and approval from the Park Commission for her proposal of Bat Boxes on Town Park Property. The project is for her Girl Scout Gold Award. Diana stated she grew up playing soccer in Groton, therefore is aware of the many mosquitoes on the playing fields. Bat Boxes are a chemical free way to control the mosquito population.

She is working with the Nashua River Watershed and her Girl Scout leader on the Bat Box Project. She spoke with Chair, Tim Siok about the best Park location for the Bat Boxes. She would like to install two boxes on Park Properties and two boxes on Town Conservation Land. Diana met with the Conservation Commission earlier tonight. The two commissions do not need to approve the Bat Boxes together, each commission will manage their own approvals.

After speaking with Tim, it was determined that Town Field, Cow Pond or Cutler Fields are ideal locations for Bat Boxes. Diana said the Bat Boxes would be installed in the tree line, not on the field directly. They are normally installed at about 12ft high. The Conservation Commission suggested an aluminum nail/fastener, so the trees will not suffer damage. Would use the same fastener of Park properties.

#### **Comments and Questions from Commissioners**

- Are the boxes permanent? *Diana stated they need to be up for a period of time, but can be removed if requested.*
- What research have you done to determine that they work? *Nashua River Watershed, stated this is good option for mosquito control.*
- Will the bats interfere with evening games? *The bat boxes will be in the trees, far from the fields.*
- What is timeline for your project? *Looking to have the boxes installed as soon as possible.*
- A site walk(s) to determine the best location and where boxes should be installed should be scheduled.
- How many boxes will be needed at each location? *No more than two.*
- Are there health risks with bat droppings? How much of a mess will there be from the droppings? *Will research and provide information.*
- Are you going to build the boxes? *Maybe one or two, going to buy also.* How large are they? *Not large, we can get the dimensions.* What do they look like? *Wooden Boxes with a front that looks like a shutter*
- How do the boxes operate? *The bats fly in, maybe up to 20 per box, fly out at night, eat the mosquitoes*

Diana will meet with Maureen in Town Hall on Thursday to get contact info on the Commissioners to set up site walks.

**Jon Strauss made a motion to approve the Bat Box project concept proposed from Diana Mendel for her Girl Scout Gold Award, with the understanding that site walks will take place to determine the best location(s) to install the Bat Boxes and that information would be forwarded to the Park Commission related to health issues, success of Bat Boxes and other relative research. Anna Eliot seconded the motion. The motion carried 3 to 0.**

Diana was asked to attend the August 6 meeting to update the Commission on the project and provide information asked for.

#### **Invasive Species Committee – Olin Lathrop**

Olin Lathrop requested to meet with the Park Commission to discuss Ash trees on Park Properties, specifically where dead trees would pose a public hazard.

Mr. Lathrop was not able to attend tonight's meeting, nor was he successful in having another member from the Invasive Species Committee attend. Maureen will contact Mr. Lathrop asking his availability to attend the Park Commission meeting scheduled for August 6, 2019.

#### **Woitowicz Tree Removal, Massachusetts Fallen Tree Law**

*Tim Siok joined the meeting via phone call 8:07pm*

Email recap from the meeting Don Black and Tim Ross had on June 5, 2019 was in the meeting packets.

Don Black walked Woitowicz and 25 Bayberry with Tim Ross. Don confirmed that the stone wall is the property line between the two properties.

Don pointed out to Mr. Ross the pipe/backflow drain coming from his property to the Park Property. Back flown water from his pool drains onto the Woitowicz Field from this drain.

Don stated he thought that it would be reasonable for Mr. Ross to take down the trees at his own expense and the Town would not take action on having Mr. Ross relocate the drain. The expense of the drain being removed/relocated would be equal to the cost of the trees being taken down.

Jon Strauss did not agree with this. Jon stated the Town has no liability/responsibility to remove the trees Mr. Ross wants removed. Jon referenced the Massachusetts Fallen Tree Law, that each member received in tonight's meeting packets. He stated that the Park Commission does not have the authority to use Town money to remove fallen trees, a tree hit by lightning is an Act of God and the Massachusetts Fallen Tree Law supports this. Jon stated that in fact we would be conducting an illegal action if we were to remove the trees. The tax payers hold us accountable to the Park Commission budget. We are charged with conducting Park business via the Town By-laws. Mr. Ross's request for assistance from the Town to remove the trees is without standing according to the Massachusetts Fallen Tree Law and Groton By-laws. Additionally, now knowing about the drain pipe, action must be taken to have it not drain pool backflow water onto Town property. Anna Eliot stated the drainage pipe was not under the charge of the Park Commission and if the Town and/or the Storm Water Committee approved the drainage pipe that would be the end of it. The Park Commission is not the Town entity to determine the status of the drainage pipe. Jon said the tree/fence issue is a homeowner insurance claim. The drain discharge is a Town violation. Tim Siok agreed with Jon, stating that we must work from all the knowledge we have today, even if we didn't have it earlier when this issue was first brought to the Park Commission. Tim also said if the health of the tree changes and becomes dangerous, the Park Commission would look into taking it down, Tim Siok will write a letter addressed to Mr. Tim Ross informing him of tonight's discussion and conclusion. Tim will share draft letter with members for input. At a later date, another letter about the drain pipe will be sent to Mr. Ross.

**Jon Strauss made a motion to send letter to Mr. Tim Ross 25 Bayberry Road confirming that the Park Commission is not liable or responsible to or has the intent to remove the lighting struck tree at Waitowicz Field sighting Massachusetts Fallen Tree Law which supports this decision. A second follow up letter will be sent at later date to address the drain pipe on 25 Bayberry Road discharging pool water onto Waitowicz Field. Anna Elliot seconded the motion. The motion carried. 3 in favor 1 abstained 0 opposed.**

#### **Park Commission Finance Discussion**

- FY19 is closed. The Dirt Doctor invoice assigned to be paid from general funds account, was reassigned to be paid from the Special Article Capital fund account. The Park Commission budget for FY19 closed balanced.
- The Park Commission's Capital Project list for unexpended funds was communicated to the Town Accountant. The Commissioners will review the projects at an upcoming meeting. There are projects that the Commission may seek CPC funds for, whether for complete or partial funding. The CPC application deadline for the next round is fast approaching. Applications are due to CPC in September. Anna Eliot's CPC appointment letter was sent to the Town Clerk, she has been sworn in, she attended her first CPC meeting.
- The Commission discussed reviewing the current vendors used for Park Property services. Tim Siok stated that a review for fertilizer vendors was done a couple of years back. The current vendor fared the best in cost and product. No change was made on the fertilizer vendor. Vendor review will be placed on an upcoming agenda.
- The concept of "Shared Expenses" with Field Users was discussed. Tim Siok thought the discussion should continue to the August meeting, with the Commissioners in the meantime thinking about possible avenues to develop and implement sharing expenses whether it be a fee-based program or a direct invoice from vendors to the Field User groups. Tim asked the members to come to the next meeting with ideas and thoughts on how the Park Commission could share expenses and if so, how to implement. *Tim Siok left meeting/signed off. 8:50pm*
- There were two invoices to review.

GELD June 2019

Triangle Porta Potty – July 8<sup>th</sup> Fireworks

**Don Black made a motion to approve and sign the GELD invoice for the month of June 2019 in the amount of \$634.29. Anna Eliot seconded the motion. The motion carried 3 to 0.**

The Triangle invoice was not approved for payment. The Commissioners questioned the invoice total. Don Black will contact Triangle to discuss the invoice.

Kenny Bushnell communicated to Maureen that he has asked G. Tompkins Painting to fill out the W9 form as requested from the Town. The G. Tompkins invoice cannot be paid until the W9 is filled out and submitted.

### **Commissioner's Updates**

#### **Anna Eliot –**

##### ***Fireman Common***

An email and photos forwarded from Anna Elliot from Penny Hommeyer/Lisa Murray were in the meeting packets. The Gardner Club had new benches installed at Firemen's Common. The benches were donated by the Groton School, Eileen Diaz and Lisa Theall coordinated the installation. Many Groton Garden Club members worked with the clean-up, installation of new plants for this Common.

Anna will send a Thank You/Note of Appreciation to the Groton Garden Club for the work done at Fireman's Common.

##### ***Sawyer Common***

Anna Elliot told the members she had a chance meeting with Karen Brackett, the GGC Blue Star Memorial Chairperson. Ms. Brackett maintains the Sawyer Common Memorial throughout the year, weeding, mulching and replacing plantings as needed. Ms. Brackett sent a correspondence to Anna stating, she was interested in becoming a steward for the entire Sawyer Common. Her grandfather's name appears on the memorial stone, she has a personnel connection to the site.

#### **Jon Strauss –**

##### ***Pickle ball***

Pickleball has become a popular sport. The Groton Herald recently had a front-page article on it. Jon will reach out to the Groton Country Club about having the tennis court on the property redone to be used as Pickleball courts. Having a Pickleball court would be a great addition to the Park Commission properties.

#### **Don Black –**

##### ***Firemen's Common Service Memorial***

A granite stone/ground plaque has been sent out for quote. The Trust Fund will cover the cost.

The wood chips at the Town Playground still need to be spread. Don will gather volunteers to have the wood chips spread. There are about 40 yards to be spread.

Cow Pond Signage for the baseball/lacrosse/soccer/football's fields has been removed/relocated. Resident Justin Frazier would like to be made aware of when the sign design/replacement of sign(s) on Cow Pond Road will be discussed. He thinks it would be great if the residents on Cow Pond Road could be part of process.

Don Black proposed creating a position titled the Keeper of the Commons. He met with Karen Brackett seeking her interest in the position. Don thinks the position should be paid \$2000 annually. Anna stated that the FY20 budget is 25% reduced from FY19. There is no budget for the position. Additionally, the position would need to be clearly defined to be approved by the Town. How many hours? What would the hourly rate be? What is the work and at what properties?

Jon expressed have consist maintenance for the Commons is really desirable, a Spring and Fall clean up would be great.

Anna stated the Garden Club does a lot in Town, recently took over Carol Wheeler Park. And the DPW does the mowing. Jon thought having Kenny and Tim's input would be helpful because they are in the landscaping business. Don stated the Commons are highly visible and should be maintained at a high standard. Don said Karen could come to a fall meeting to discuss the proposal.

### **Admin. Updates**

- Additional meeting dates for budget discussions and presentation prep for the Select Board and Finance Committee for FY20 should be scheduled. Maureen will schedule the GELD meeting room for Monday, November 4<sup>th</sup> at 5pm and November 18<sup>th</sup> at 5pm. A possible additional October meeting may be scheduled if the regular monthly meeting's agenda is full with regular business.
- Tim Siok responded to an email stating a concern about the pesticide use on Park Properties. The Commissioners received a copy of the email in their packets. Maureen will see if there is a way to manage communicate to the Town when field maintenance is taking place.
- John Giger is the Park Commission liaison from the Select Board. The memo from Town Manager with Board Liaison Assignments was in the meeting packets.

- Hazel Grove emailed photos of the grading on the track. Hazel Grove pulled a permit to install a permanent shade structure where the trees were removed last winter. Supporting documents were in the packets.

**Donald Black made a motion to accept the minutes of June 5, 2019 with one correction. Anna Eliot seconded the motion. The motion carried 3 to 0.**

**Don Black moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:25 pm. Anna Eliot seconded. Motion carried 3:0.**

**Next meetings:** Tuesday, August 6, 2019  
Tuesday, September 10, 2019